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ABSTRACT

In October 1996, Illinois' Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC) conducted a longitudinal study of the characteristics of and outcomes experienced by students who entered the college for the first time in fall 1993, gathering data on retention rates, average attempted and earned cumulative hours, and graduation rates over 3 years. Of the 3,146 students included in the study, 36% were designated as Associate of Arts (AA) students; 12 % as Associate of Science (AS); 16% as Associate of Applied Science (AAS); 9% as certificate; and 30% as course enrollees, or students registering in college-level courses with no particular educational goal. Study findings included the following: (1) the retention rate after one quarter was 70% for the entire group, with AS students having the highest retention rate at 82% and certificate students the lowest at 51%; (2) as of summer 1996, the average cumulative attempted hours for college credit courses was 30, while the average cumulative earned hours was 24.8; (3) AS students had the highest number of attempted hours at 39.2 and the highest earned at 32.7, while course enrollees had the lowest of each; and (4) overall, 12% of the students had received a degree or certificate by August 1996, while AS students had the highest graduation rate at 16% and course enrollees had the lowest at 9%. (AJL)

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ED 401 968

Cohort Analysis, Fall 1993 New Students

By

Moraine Valley Community College

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October 1996

RE: Cohort Analysis, Fall 1993 New Students

Introduction

The following report summarizes selected longitudinal characteristics of students entering Moraine Valley for the first time in fall 1993. The characteristics analyzed are: retention rates, average cumulative attempted and earned hours, average number of terms attended, and graduation rates.

Definitions and Student Characteristics

The fall 1993 cohort analyzed in this report includes a total of 3,146 first-time students enrolled in a degree curriculum or taking college-level courses. (See Table 1.) New students enrolled in vocational skills, adult basic, adult secondary, or English as a second language programs were not included.

The initial curriculum designations of A.A., A.S., A.A.S., certificate, or course enrollee were based on the students' fall 93 curriculum code. For example, a student with a curriculum code of 1202-Business Administration Associate was assigned to the A.A.S. category. Slightly more than one-third of the fall 1993 cohort students were enrolled in an A.A. curriculum (34 percent), 16 percent were in an A.A.S. curriculum, 12 percent were in an A.S. curriculum, and 9 percent were in a certificate program. The remaining 30 percent were course enrollees, students who register for one or more college-level courses with no particular educational goal in mind.

It should be noted that an initial degree or certificate curriculum does not always indicate a firm intention to complete a program at Moraine Valley. Many students transfer before completing an associate's degree. Students in the occupational areas often leave when they have enough skills to get a job. Many students are unsure of their degree plans and many change their mind.

Almost half of the fall 93 cohort were recent high school graduates (48 percent graduated from high school in 1993). Slightly more than half (52 percent) were not recent high school graduates, or their year of high school graduation was unknown.

Almost two-thirds of the new students were age 20 and under (65 percent), 12 percent were between the ages of 21 and 25, and 22 percent were 26 or older. Asian students had the highest percent age 20 and under (70 percent), followed by white and Hispanic students (67 percent), black students (51 percent), and foreign students (33 percent).

The number of male and female students was almost the same. A comparison of ethnic status

Table 1
Fall 93 First Time Student Cohort
Three Year Analysis - Fall 1993 to August 1996

Characteristic	First Time Fall 93 Students N	First Time Fall 93 Students %	Percent Returning Next Sem.	Average Cumulative Attempted Hours	Average Cumulative Earned Hours	Average Number of Terms (summer=.5)	Received MVCC Degree By August 1996 N	Received MVCC Degree By August 1996 %
All Fall 1993								
First Time Students	3,146	100%	70%	30.0	24.8	3.3	377	12%
By Initial Curriculum								
AA	1,058	34%	79%	34.3	28.5	3.6	137	13%
AS	377	12%	82%	39.2	32.7	3.9	60	16%
AAS	496	16%	70%	28.9	23.7	3.3	66	13%
Certificate	285	9%	51%	19.0	15.5	2.5	31	11%
Course Enrollee	930	30%	60%	25.4	20.9	3.0	83	9%
By High School Grad Year								
Recent high school graduate (1993 grad)	1,520	48%	84%	41.5	34.6	4.1	262	17%
Not recent grad/unknown	1,626	52%	56%	19.3	15.7	2.6	115	7%
By Age								
20 & under	2,050	65%	79%	37.6	30.9	3.7	303	15%
21-25	387	12%	51%	18.3	14.4	2.5	24	6%
26 and older	700	22%	52%	14.3	12.5	2.5	49	7%
By Gender								
Female	1,572	50%	72%	31.5	26.7	3.5	229	15%
Male	1,574	50%	67%	28.6	22.9	3.1	148	9%
By Ethnic								
Asian	33	1%	79%	28.7	21.4	3.2	2	6%
Black	197	6%	52%	14.9	10.1	2.0	6	3%
Hispanic	128	4%	70%	29.1	23.0	3.3	9	7%
White	2,733	87%	70%	31.1	25.9	3.4	355	13%
Foreign	33	1%	97%	33.6	28.6	3.6	4	12%
By Reason for attending								
Transfer courses	1,437	46%	76%	34.3	28.4	3.6	210	15%
New Career	1,041	33%	64%	25.0	20.5	3.1	90	9%
Present job skills	77	2%	35%	8.2	7.1	1.8	2	3%
Explore courses	134	4%	71%	35.2	29.4	3.5	18	13%
Personal Interests	442	14%	69%	30.4	25.3	3.4	56	13%
By Status								
Part-Time	1,413	45%	51%	15.4	12.7	2.6	72	5%
Full-Time	1,733	55%	85%	41.9	34.7	3.9	305	18%
By Degree Intent								
Plan to earn MVCC degree	1551	49%	79%	35.4	29.2	3.7	230	15%
Plan to earn MVCC cert.	220	7%	61%	25.1	21.2	3.0	33	15%
No MVCC degree plans	1375	44%	60%	24.8	20.4	3.0	114	8%
Full-time/degree seeking	1,176	37%	85%	41.8	34.6	3.9	214	18%

Note: New students are those in degree curriculums or course enrollees only; ABE, voc skills, etc. students were deleted; attempted and earned hours include college-credit courses only; the highest possible number of terms is 8.0 (summer 93-summer 96 hours were included); graduation rates include degree or certificate.

shows that 87 percent of the cohort was white, 6 percent were black, 4 percent were Hispanic, 1 percent were Asian, and 1 percent were foreign residents. Less than 1 percent were American Indian, therefore American Indian students were not included in this analysis.

Students are asked at registration to indicate their main reason for attending Moraine Valley (intent). Somewhat less than half (46 percent) of the fall 93 cohort had a "transfer" intent (to earn credits for transfer to another college); 33 percent had a "new career" intent (to learn an occupational skill for a future job); 2 percent had a "present job skills" intent (to improve skills needed in a present job); 4 percent had an "explore courses" intent (to explore courses to decide on a college program and/or career); and 14 percent had a "personal interests" intent (to explore a personal interest or for self-development).

Part-time or full-time student status was based on the students' fall 93 credit hours. Fifty-five percent of the fall 1993 cohort were initially full-time students (registered for 12 credit hours or more), and 45 percent were part-time. The percent of students who were full-time was similar for black, Hispanic, and white students (55-58 percent), lower for Asian students (45 percent), but much higher for foreign students (91 percent).

Students are also asked at registration if they intend to complete a Moraine Valley degree or certificate. In fall 1993, almost half of the cohort said that they planned to earn a Moraine Valley degree (49 percent). A much lower percent intended to earn a Moraine Valley certificate (7 percent), and 44 percent said they did not intend to earn a degree. The highest percent of degree-seeking students were foreign (82 percent), followed by black students (58 percent), Hispanic students (55 percent), white students (51 percent), and Asian students (42 percent).

The Federal Student Right-to-Know Act requires colleges to provide a graduation rate for all first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. Thirty-seven percent of the cohort were both full-time and degree or certificate seeking.

Retention Rates

The retention rate, or the percent of new fall 1993 students who returned to Moraine Valley in spring 1994 is shown in column 4 of Table 1. For the cohort overall, 70 percent returned to Moraine Valley the following semester. There was considerable variation in retention rates by student characteristic.

Comparing students by initial curriculum, A.S. students had the highest retention rate (82 percent), followed by A.A. students (79 percent). The retention rates were lower for A.A.S. students (70 percent), course enrollees (60 percent) and certificate students (51 percent).

Recent high school graduates had a much higher retention rate (84 percent) than students who were not recent graduates (56 percent). The youngest students (20 and under) had a much higher retention rate (79 percent) than students between 21 and 25, and 26 and over (51-52 percent). Female students had a somewhat higher retention rate (72 percent) than male students (67 percent).

Comparing students by ethnic status, foreign students had the highest retention rate (97 percent), followed by Asian students (79 percent). White and Hispanic students had the same rate (70 percent). Black students had the lowest retention rate (52 percent).

Comparing students by reason for attending, students with transfer intent had the highest retention rate (76 percent) and students with present job skills intent had the lowest (35 percent). Retention rates for the remaining intents were: new career, 64 percent; explore courses, 71 percent; and personal interests, 69 percent.

The percent of full-time students who returned the following semester (85 percent) was more than 30 percent higher than that of part-time students (51 percent).

Students who planned to earn a Moraine Valley degree had a higher retention rate (79 percent) than students who planned to earn a certificate (61 percent) or had no degree plans (60 percent). Students who were both full-time and degree-seeking had a retention rate of 85 percent, the same rate as all full-time students.

Average Cumulative Hours Attempted and Earned

The cumulative attempted hours and cumulative earned hours were calculated over three years (from summer/fall 1993 to summer 1996) and include college-credit courses only. For the fall 1993 cohort overall, the average cumulative attempted hours was 30.0, and the average cumulative earned hours was 24.8 hours, a difference of 5.2 hours. (See Table 1, columns 5 and 6).

Comparing students by initial curriculum, A.S. students had the highest cumulative attempted hours (39.2) and earned hours (32.7); followed by A.A. students (34.3 hours attempted and 28.5 hours earned). The cumulative hours attempted and earned were lower for A.A.S. students (28.9 and 23.7 respectively). Certificate programs require fewer hours for completion, and certificate students had fewer cumulative attempted hours (19.0) and earned hours (15.5). Course enrollee students attempted 25.4 hours and earned 20.9 credit hours over three years.

Recent high school graduates attempted an average of 41.5 hours, more than twice the average for students who were not recent graduates (19.3 hours). The average number of cumulative earned hours was 34.6 for recent high school graduates compared to 15.7 for those who were not recent graduates.

The youngest students had the highest average hours attempted (37.6) and earned (30.9). This was considerably higher than that of students age 21-25 (18.3 attempted and 14.4 earned), and students 26 and older (14.3 attempted and 12.5 earned). Female students had a slightly higher attempted hour average (31.5) than male students (28.6) and the earned hour average was also slightly higher for females (26.7) than males (22.9).

Comparing students by ethnic status, foreign students had the highest average hours attempted (33.6) and earned (28.6), followed by white students (31.1 hours attempted, 25.9 hours earned), Hispanic students (29.1 attempted and 23.0 earned), and Asian students (28.7 hours attempted, 21.4

hours earned). These averages were about twice that of black students (14.9 hours attempted and 10.1 hours earned).

Comparing students by reason for attending, students exploring courses had the highest average attempted and earned hours (35.2 hours attempted and 29.4 earned), followed by transfer (34.3 and 28.4), personal interests (30.4 and 25.3), new career (25.0 and 20.5), and present job skills (8.2 and 7.1).

Not surprisingly, full-time students attempted (41.9) and earned (34.7) more credit hours than part-time students (15.4 hours attempted and 12.7 hours earned).

Comparing students by degree intent, students who planned to earn a Moraine Valley degree attempted and earned more hours (35.4 and 29.2 respectively) than students who planned to earn a certificate (25.1 attempted, 21.2 earned) or had no degree plans (24.8 attempted, 20.4 earned).

Full-time/degree-seeking students attempted 41.8 hours and earned 34.6, about the same as all full-time students.

Average Number of Terms

The average number of terms students attended Moraine Valley between summer/fall 1993 and summer 1996 is shown in column 7 of Table 1. The highest possible number of terms is 8.0 (summer term = .5). For the fall 1993 cohort overall, the average number of terms students attended Moraine Valley was 3.3.

Comparing students by initial curriculum, A.S. students had the highest average number of terms at Moraine Valley (3.9) followed by A.A. students (3.6 terms) and A.A.S. students (3.3 terms). Course enrollees attended for an average of 3.0 terms, while certificate students attended 2.5 terms.

Recent high school graduates attended Moraine Valley for 4.1 terms, an average of 1.5 terms more than students who were not recent graduates (2.6 terms). The youngest students had the highest average number of terms (3.7), while students age 21 and over averaged 2.5 terms. Female students had a slightly higher average number of terms at Moraine Valley (3.5) than male students (3.1 terms).

Comparing students by ethnic status, foreign students had the highest average number of terms at Moraine Valley (3.6 terms), followed by white students (3.4), Hispanic students (3.3), and Asian students (3.2). The average number of terms was much lower for black students (2.0).

Comparing students by reason for attending, transfer intent students had the highest average number of terms (3.6) and students with present job skills intent had the lowest (1.8 terms). The average number of terms at Moraine Valley for the remaining intents was: new career (3.1 terms), explore courses (3.5 terms), and personal interests (3.4 terms).

For full-time students, the average number of terms at Moraine Valley was 3.9, an average of

1.3 terms more than that of part-time students (2.6 terms).

Students who planned to earn a Moraine Valley degree had a higher average number of term attended (3.7) than students who planned to earn a certificate or had no degree plans (3.0 terms).

The average number of terms at Moraine Valley for full-time/degree-seeking students was 3.9, the same as that of all full-time students.

Graduation Rates

Graduation rate totals were calculated over three years, from fall 1993 to summer 1996. The percent of the fall 1993 cohort who received a Moraine Valley degree or certificate is shown in column 9 of Table 1. Overall, 12 percent of the cohort had received a Moraine Valley degree or certificate by August 1996.

Comparing students by initial curriculum, A.S. students had the highest graduation rate (16 percent). The graduation rates were lower for A.A. students (13 percent), A.A.S. students (13 percent) and certificate students (11 percent). As expected, course enrollees had the lowest graduation rate (9 percent).

Recent high school graduates had a graduation rate of 17 percent, 10 percent more than the graduation rate for students who were not recent high school graduates (7 percent).

Students aged 20 and under had a graduation rate of 15 percent, more than twice that of the students 21 and over (6-7 percent). Female students had a 6 percent higher graduation rate than male students (15 percent compared to 9 percent).

Comparing students by ethnic status, white students had the highest graduation rate (13 percent), followed closely by foreign students (12 percent). Graduation rates drop for Hispanic students (7 percent) and Asian students (6 percent), and are lowest for black students (3 percent).

Comparing students by reason for attending, transfer intent students had the highest graduation rate (15 percent), while explore courses and personal interests were slightly lower (13 percent). Graduation rates for the remaining intents were lower: new career (9 percent) and present job skills (3 percent).

The percent of full-time students who graduated was 18 percent. This was 13 percent more than the graduation rate of part-time students (5 percent).

Students who planned to earn a Moraine Valley degree and students who planned to earn a certificate had the same graduation rate (15 percent). Not surprisingly, this was higher than students who had no degree plans (8 percent).

The percent of full-time/degree-seeking students who graduated was the same as full-time students (18 percent).

Summary

An analysis of the fall 1993 student cohort shows a wide variation in persistence and enrollment patterns for Moraine Valley students.

- Students with the highest retention rates were: in A.S. or A.A. curriculums, recent high school graduates, age 20 and under, Asian, foreign, full-time, degree-seeking, and full-time/degree-seeking students. Foreign students had the highest retention rate (97 percent).

- Students with the lowest retention rates were: in certificate curriculums, age 21 and older, black, students with present job skills intent, and part-time. Students with a present job skills intent had the lowest retention rate (35 percent).

- Students with the highest average cumulative attempted and earned hours were: in A.S. or A.A. curriculums, recent high school graduates, age 20 and under, students with a transfer or explore courses intent, full-time, degree-seeking, and full-time/degree-seeking. Full-time students had the highest average cumulative attempted and earned hours (41.9 and 34.7).

- Students with the lowest average cumulative attempted and earned hours were: in certificate programs, not recent high school graduates, age 21 and older, black, students with a present job skills intent, and part-time. Students with present job skills intent had the lowest average cumulative hours attempted (8.2) and earned (7.1).

- Students with the highest average number of terms at Moraine Valley were: in A.A. or A.S. curriculums, recent high school graduates, age 20 and under, foreign, students with a transfer intent, full-time, degree-seeking, and full-time/degree-seeking. Recent high school graduates had the highest average number of terms at Moraine Valley (4.1 percent).

- Students with the lowest average number of terms were: in certificate programs, not recent high school graduates, age 21 and older, black, students with a present job skills intent, and part-time. Students with present job skills intent had the lowest average number of terms (1.8).

- Students with the highest 3-year graduation rate were: in A.S. curriculums, recent high school graduates, age 20 and under, female, students with a transfer intent, full-time, degree-seeking, and full-time/degree-seeking. Full-time students and full-time/degree-seeking students had the highest graduation rate (18 percent).

- Students with the lowest 3-year graduation rate were: not recent high school graduates, age 21 and older, Asian, black, Hispanic, students with a present job skills intent, and part-time. Black students and students with a present job skills intent had the lowest graduation rate (3 percent).

- Many of these patterns are predictable. For example, students with a degree intent would be expected to have a higher graduation rate than students who did not initially plan to graduate, full-time students by definition attempt more credit hours than part-time students, etc.

- This (three-year) analysis of the fall 93 cohort showed that recent high school graduation and full-time status were better predictors of retention, hours attempted and earned, and graduation than the students' stated intent to earn a degree.

- Many students change their initial educational goals, as indicated by the course enrollees and non-degree seekers who graduated (9 percent and 8 percent respectively).

- While black students were somewhat older than Asian, Hispanic and white students, this can explain only a small part of their much lower retention and graduation rates. These lower rates cannot be explained by black students' initial curriculum, degree-intent, or full-time/part-time status (which were similar to Asian, Hispanic and white students).

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